

713. Oaths. Truthfulness vs. success. It is evident that truthfulness or untruthfulness, when either is a group characteristic, is due to a conviction that societal welfare is served by one or the other. Truthfulness is, therefore, primary in the mores. It does not proceed from the religion, but the religion furnishes a sanction for the view which prevails in the mores. Oaths and imprecations are primitive means of invoking the religious sanction in promises and contracts. They always implied that the superior powers would act in the affairs of men in a proposed way, if the oath maker should break his word. This implication failed so regularly that faith in oaths never could be maintained. Since they have fallen into partial disuse the expediency of truthfulness has been perceived, and the value of a reputation for it has been recognized. Thus it has become a question whether a true success policy is to be based on truth or falsehood. The mores of groups contain their answer, which they inculcate on the young.

714. The clever hero. Krishna. The wily and clever hero, who knows what to do to get out of a difficulty, or to accomplish a purpose, is a very popular character in the great epics. In the *Mahabharata* Krishna is such a hero, who invents stratagems and policies for the Panduings in their strife with the Kuruings. The king of the latter, when dying, declares that the Panduings have always been dishonorable and tricky, while he and his party have always adhered to honorable methods. However, he is dying and his party is almost annihilated. The victors are somewhat affected by his taunts, which refer to Krishna's inventions and suggestions, but Krishna shows them the booty and says : " But

for my stratagems you would have had none
of these fine
things. What do you care that you got them by
tricks ? Do
you not want them ? " They applaud and praise
him. Then the
surviving Kuruings, weary of virtue and defeat,
surprise and
murder the Panduings in the night, an act which
was contrary
to the code of honorable war. The antagonism of a
virtue policy
and a success policy could not be more strongly
presented ¹ In

¹ Holtzmann, *Indische Sagen* I, 170.